

Railway communication between North and Central and South America. A memorial on the subject to the Congress of the United States by Hinton Rowan Helper. St. Louis, Missouri, October 12, 1882.

RAILWAY COMMUNICATION BETWEEN NORTH AND CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA.

A MEMORIAL ON THE SUBJECT TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, BY HINTON ROWAN HELPER.

St. Louis, Missouri, October 12, 1882.

To the Honorable, the Senators and Representatives of the United States of America in Congress Assembled:

Gentlemen: Sixteen years ago, lacking less than two months, that is to say, in the latter part of November, 1866, while many thousands of miles from where I am now, and while suffering severely from the Neptunian nausea and torture of seasickness—the ship on which I was then a passenger, from Buenos Ayres to New York, having been swiftly blown, by an unusually violent Argentine Pampero, out of the mouth of the River Plate to a longitudinal point on the Atlantic ocean, fifty miles or more off the coast of Brazil, in or near the latitude of Rio de Janeiro,—I conceived substantially the idea of opening railway communication between the United States and Mexico and all the other independent nations of North and Central and South America. At first, and for a long time afterward, that idea was itself more or less repugnant to all thoughts suggestive of sequential calculation and detail. But I soon found that the impression which had been made upon my mind was deep, indelible and persistent. In all my wakeful hours, day and night, it was with me, and is yet with me, as an ever-present and ever-pulsive force. So constant and irresistible was it in its pressure upon me, that it spared me, and still spares me, but very little time—and even that little with seeming reluctance—to think of anything else.

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Finally, after having made no less than five eventful voyages to and from different parts of South America, and having besides, under many hardships and great peril, twice crossed that continent from east to west, on muleback, I determined to formulate the enterprise and bring it before the public, just so soon as it should be in my power to fortify my position with such concurrent backing as could be secured in a series of five of the ablest essays obtainable upon the subject at an expenditure of not more than five thousand dollars. That amount, in one sum, (in addition to much larger aggregates previously and subsequently expended exclusively at my own instance and cost,—no one whomsoever being as yet associated with me in the undertaking,) I was not fully able

and ready to give for the purpose, until July, 1879, when the money was placed in the hands of a committee of three of the most honorable and competent residents of this city, who, after eighteen months' advertising of the proffered prizes, received forty-nine competitive disquisitions; forty-four of which were returned to their respective writers, and the other five, the five best, according to the report of the committee, were delivered to me, and by me published in one duodecimo volume, of nearly five hundred pages, entitled "The Three Americas Railway."

In advertising for the essays, and in offering the prizes therefor, (all of which were paid within three days after the awards were made,) no limitation whatever was stipulated as regards any country or any people, but, upon principles of perfect equality and fairness, the competition was expressly submitted and kept open to the universal republic of letters. Not one of all the forty-nine papers was in any respect written to order; nor, until the awards were made by the committee, acting altogether independently of myself, as I had particularly desired and requested they should act, did I know a single contestant who was to receive a prize. All these facts, and many others akin to them, are plainly and minutely set forth in the Preface and Introduction of the book above designated. Early in July of last year, immediately after the publication of the five prize essays in one volume, I addressed a copy of the work, by mail, postage paid, respectively to the President and Vice-President of the United States, to every member of the Cabinet at Washington, to every Senator and Representative in Congress, and to many other gentlemen occupying high and important official positions under, or in connection with, the General Government. Upon this point the following certificate from Postmaster Hays, of this city, is conclusive; his certificate being here published for the reason that many members of Congress (to several of whom duplicates have been mailed,) have no recollection of having ever received the book; though, in truth, not one of the whole number of either House was overlooked or neglected in this regard:

[Copy.]

Post Office, St. Louis, Missouri, July 6, 1881.

On the 2nd instant, Wm. S. Bryan, publisher, mailed through this office, the postage being prepaid, one hundred and sixty-four copies, and to-day he has mailed, the postage being also prepaid, two hundred and fifty-three copies—in all 417 copies,—of a new book just published by him, entitled "The Three Americas Railway," addressed to the President of the United States, the members of his Cabinet, the Judges of the Supreme Court, the Senators and Representatives in Congress, and other high functionaries of the National Government.

Samuel Hays, Postmaster,

By Edwin C. Bennett, Assistant.

A copy of this memorial to Congress is now mailed, postage paid, to every gentleman, whether in office or out of office, to whom the book itself was addressed. Two or three sentences from the report of the committee that examined the essays and awarded the prizes, will suffice to show the high estimation in which the five superior documents educed in advocacy of the projected undertaking are held by those very intelligent gentlemen, who, speaking as approvingly of the purpose as of the papers, say:

* * * "We incline to the opinion, that there are but few, if any, clearheaded thinkers, in this or any other country, who will arise from a careful perusal of the five successful papers which you have thus elicited, without giving a hearty assent to the general correctness of your own views in relation to this stupendous enterprise. It affords us great pleasure, therefore, to extend our warmest congratulations to yourself and the five successful competitors, who, by your liberal provision, have won honors and prizes, in being so earnestly and auspiciously engaged in the inauguration and prosecution of a work which promises such boundless benefits. We beg to add that we have been not only much interested, but greatly edified, in the perusal of the various papers submitted, and more deeply impressed 4 than ever before with the great resources and inviting fields of Mexico, Central and South America."

As fairly indicative of what is generally thought of the enterprise by those (as yet by far too few) who have given it due consideration, space, valuable as it is in this connection, will here be allotted to the opinions of one illustrious Senator, one distinguished Representative in Congress, and one eminent civilian,—the last being the Hon. Hiram Barney, Collector of the Customs at New York, under Secretary Chase,—as follows:

[Copy.]

Mansfield, Ohio, July 18, 1881.

Hinton R. Helper, Esq., St. Louis, Mo.

My Dear Sir. — When I received your book on "The Three Americas Railway," it did not attract my attention. But I have since carefully read it, and am deeply interested in the subject matter. The essays are well written, and the facts stated are striking and impressive. No greater enterprise has been suggested during our time; nor does the difficulty seem so great to me as to deter any one from an active and vigorous effort to secure the construction of the work proposed. I should be glad to receive any information bearing on the subject, and certainly will keep it in mind. If I can suggest,

or aid in any feasible method, I will be glad to do so. The part of the road proposed through the United States will be readily constructed, and that to the City of Mexico seems to be in a fair way of being built. But the system should be operated as a whole, and under the most skillful and able direction possible.

Very truly yours, John Sherman.

[Copy.]

Colorado Springs, Col., Aug. 26, 1881.

Hinton R. Helper, Esq., St. Louis, Mo.

My Dear Sir. —Your letter of the 17th instant was forwarded to me from Springfield, Illinois, and is received. I have also received a copy of the volume entitled “The Three Americas Railway,” for which please accept my thanks. I have read the five essays carefully, and with great profit to myself. I think they clearly demonstrate that a railway connecting the three Americas would be a paying investment, and a work of the greatest benefit to the peoples of the two continents. The constitutional power of our government to aid an ex-territorial enterprise was not discussed by any of the essayists, but will doubtless be carefully considered by Congress, should aid from our government be requested.

Yours, very respectfully, Wm. M. Springer.

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If the Special Commissioner provided for in the bill which appears on subsequent pages of this memorial shall do his whole duty—and to the full and perfect performance of which duty he should be held to the most rigid responsibility—the international question here raised by Representative Springer will be virtually settled in the interest of the road, and equally in the interest of all the countries through which the road will run, quite in advance of any discussion, not premature, which his suggestions may excite.

[Copy.]

New York, March 20, 1882.

Hinton R. Helper, Esq.

My Dear Sir: — * * * Mr. Romero, the able and distinguished Minister from Mexico, called on me to-day, and said he would like to have an extra copy of your book for his Government, and I promised to ask you to send it to him. ***Your plan for uniting the American sentiment and the common interests of the peoples of the two American continents, and of providing the means of intercommunication and commerce between all the American nationalities, seems to be entirely feasible, and more economical and more certainly productive of the great results in view, than any other that to my knowledge has been suggested. We may expend upon ocean subsidies as much or more money than it will cost to construct the proposed railway, without securing certain or permanent results. It would, besides, only be in competition with the marine of other and richer countries, to which the ocean is as free as it is to us; and, in case of a foreign war, our ocean commerce, and all invested in it, would be subjected to the risk of destruction. Your plan will secure to the several nations of North and Central and South America their own commerce and all its fruits and profits in perpetuity. The line, located in the north and sought central sections of the two continents, will be inapproachable by foreign foes; while it will serve to clasp our American republics together with bands of steel, and make them one in interest and in peaceful communion of industry, and, as against foreign force, absolutely invincible.***

Most truly yours, Hiram Barney.

One of the longest and ablest communications yet received in advocacy of the far-extending and wide-branching intercontinental railway thus proposed, is from the Hon. James B. Belford, member of Congress from Colorado. Only because of its extreme length is his excellent paper withheld from insertion here. Other broad-minded statesmen have also informed themselves of the merits of the enterprise, and have heartily approved it. 6 Among these are Senators Cockrell, of Missouri, Jackson, of Tennessee, and Garland, of Arkansas; Representatives Brewer, of New Jersey, Herndon, of Alabama, and House, of Tennessee; Governors Cullom, of Illinois, St. John, of Kansas, and Crittenden, of Missouri. A goodly number of wise and worthy diplomatists from foreign countries—mostly ministers from our neighboring nationalities—have likewise carefully weighed and analyzed the scheme, and testified their unqualified belief in the almost inconceivable importance of the measure to the future welfare of the three great Americas, North, Central, and South.

Incidentally I may here remark—though the incidents now mentionable are scarcely worthy of mention—that, strange as it may seem, strange as are any of the inexplicable vagaries and immoralities of the human mind, since the first publication of my projected intercontinental railway, no less than four different claimants for the honor of having originated the scheme have appeared at as many different times and places! Of no one of these spectre-like aspirants for fame had I ever before known or heard anything whatever. A whole score of claimants, if not two or three score,

or more, may possibly be in the field before the lapse of another year. To each of the first two contestants, who quite astounded me by their sudden and unexpected presumption, I proposed a candid comparison of dates, data and documents, and otherwise suggested a frank, friendly and decisive arbitration of all matters in dispute; but neither of them (both being conscious of their ridiculous pretensions) dared to meet me in full light, or upon open ground. To neither of the other two have I paid any attention whatever; and it is by no means probable that I shall have any time at all to waste in that way, or in any similar way, hereafter.

Honored Senators and Representatives: The most essential part of this memorial is now reached, —the following bill, which ten or twelve of your own learned and estimable colleagues, regardless of all partisan proclivities, have either had a hand in framing or a voice in approving. The bill is here printed precisely as it came last from the hands of the Hon. Charles O'Neill, who, as many of you are well aware, is now, and has long been, one of the most experienced and exemplary members of Congress from Philadelphia. Immediately following the bill itself is a somewhat elaborate brief of reasons why the same should be passed. To each and every reason there presented I respectfully request such sincere and thoughtful attention as may be due to an immense yet manageable enterprise which has for its object the improvement of the material, mental and moral condition of more than one hundred millions of Americans in the three Americas.

It is but too seldom that an opportunity is presented to the statesmanship of any one country for the exercise of its wisdom and virtue equally in the interest of other countries and peoples; and still fewer are the occasions when such statesmanship may, with all safety and propriety, busy itself in promoting at once the welfare of so many as seventeen different and distinct nations, occupying and controlling almost the whole area of two vast continents. This is the task of rare, if not unequaled, honor and importance which it is now within the power of the Congress of the United States to perform. The first necessary step toward the consummation of the end in view will be the passage of the following bill, or such better bill as your combined and superior judgment may perfect by modification of the draft here presented. Very soon after the passage of the bill, if passed, I shall, actuated by an ardent desire to advance the measure in the most effective and prudent manner possible, exercise the liberty of submitting to the President the names of three or four true and serviceable gentlemen, any one of whom, because of his integrity, his affability, his wide experience in diplomacy, his cosmopolitan acquirements, his linguistic abilities, and his general competency, will, if appointed to the office designated, doubtless prove himself to be an efficient Commissioner; or, if His Excellency shall know and nominate a gentleman of still greater fitness for the position, so much the better for the enterprise.

A Bill to authorize the appointment of a Special Commissioner to visit the principal countries of Central and South America, for the purpose of collecting information looking to the extension of American trade and commerce, and the strengthening of friendly and mutually advantageous relations between the United States and all the other American nationalities.

Sec 1. *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby, authorized and requested to appoint, for a term not exceeding two years, a Special Commissioner whose duty it shall be to proceed, as soon as may be convenient after such appointment, to the fifteen distinctively independent countries here designated, in the order indicated; namely: Guatemala, Honduras, Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, the Argentine Republic, Chili, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil; and inquire diligently after and collect such information as may be useful in extending trade and commerce, and in strengthening the subsisting friendly relations and reciprocally sustaining principles and policies between those several neighboring nationalities and the United States.

Sec. 2. That it shall also be the duty of such Commissioner to inquire into and ascertain the feelings and inclinations of the peoples of those countries with reference to railway intercommunication between themselves respectively and the United States, and likewise what guarantees, immunities, and privileges, if any, have already been granted by them, or that they may hereafter be willing to grant, looking to the increase and quickening of postal communication, commerce, trade and travel, between their own inhabitants respectively and the inhabitants of the United States.

Sec. 3. That it shall be the further duty of such Commissioner to transmit his report in writing, from time to time, to the Secretary of State of the United States, concerning the matters and interests hereinbefore mentioned, which reports, when received, shall be preserved in the Department of State for such reference and use as the public welfare may seem to require.

Sec. 4. That the said Commissioner shall receive the sum of ten thousand dollars per annum, as compensation in full for the services rendered by him under the provisions of this act, and shall from that allowance defray all of his own expenses of whatever nature or sort; but he may, if in his experience and judgment it shall be necessary, employ an assistant at a salary, payable by the United States, of not more than three thousand dollars per annum.

Sec. 5. That the sum of twenty-six thousand dollars, payable by the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, upon the warrant of the Secretary of State, be, and the same is hereby, appropriated

out of any money in the Treasury of the United States not otherwise appropriated; or so much thereof as may be necessary to pay the salaries of the said Commissioner and his assistant.

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A Brief of Reasons why the Foregoing Bill Should be Passed.

How to divert into the United States the greater portion of the vast volume of trade and travel now passing from Central and South America into Europe, is the weighty problem which is intended to be solved under the operations of this bill. Though the phraseology of the bill is amply perspicuous and explicit as to what it would accomplish, yet it really means much more than is expressed within itself.

The maritime nations of the old world, in competing for the trade and travel of Spanish America, have greatly the advantage of us, at this time, and prospectively for a long while to come, on the ocean; but on the land we can surpass them all, and secure forever the bulk of the foreign business of our sister continent, as also most of the foreign business of the interjacent countries—the five republics of Central America—whose external commerce should naturally come to us, and not be compelled to seek for distant and less profitable markets beyond the Atlantic. In the particular case under consideration, not ships nor shipping, but a great railway, or a system of railways, connecting us with most, if not all, of the distinctively independent nations of Central and South America, will alone serve us, and serve them, effectively and successfully in this regard.

Direct and speedy railway communication with all those countries will soon be followed by quick and increasing correspondence, by continuous incomings of their peoples and outgoings of our people, and by rapid transit, in every direction, of all kinds and immense quantities of merchandise. An all-reaching railway, then, or a chain of all-reaching railways, being the transcendent desideratum, let us be prudent and diligent in our efforts to secure its construction. The perfect planning and building of the road can not be executed at once; the undertaking being one of unequaled magnitude. Certain preliminary work is indispensably necessary. Maps, charts, documents, and much miscellaneous data, will first have to be obtained from more than a dozen different nations and governments. Only a competent and zealous officer, especially empowered by his government, can gather together, arrange, digest, intelligently report upon, and orderly adduce for future use, the sources of accurate information thus required.

The enterprise as a whole contemplates an integrity of aim and 10 interest, a oneness and connectedness of thought and purpose, which, as it is believed, can be conveniently advanced and achieved only by a Special Commissioner; ministers and consuls being too widely separated and too completely detached from the central and essential ideas thus demanding consideration and action. Besides, ministers and consuls, as yet having little or no knowledge of what is herein really sought to

be accomplished, and not being provided with the means indispensable to the procurement of the requisite facts,—even where they are personally in position to do so,—cannot with any certainty be relied upon to perform promptly and adequately the very important services thus desired.

The whole foreign trade and commerce of South and Central America and Mexico, during the 1880, having been carried on principally with Europe, was substantially as follows:

Exports \$386,000,000

Imports 335,000,600—\$721,000,000.

Of which the amount of business done with the United States (notwithstanding the fact in our favor that all the distinctive American nationalities are contiguous,) was, substantially, only as follows:

Exports to the United States, \$82,000,000.

Imports from the U. S. 34,000,000—\$116,000,000.

Difference (to our serious loss and humiliation,) in favor of Europe \$605,000,000.

Let us, like sensible, patriotic and vigilant Americans, reverse this exceedingly discreditable condition of things. Our mercantile and manufacturing interests especially demand immediate action in this respect. Much the greater portion of the large and constantly increasing foreign commerce of South and Central America naturally belongs to us. The passage by the Congress of the United States of the bill here considered, though in money it requires but a bagatelle in comparison with what it will probably be worth, if it shall be properly acted upon in the spirit of its conception and purpose, will be a very material contribution, a long step indeed, toward the desired achievement.

As a means to the reasonably early success of the effort to establish railway communication with Central and South America, a great deal of important preliminary information, of a perfectly reliable nature, is absolutely necessary; and, as has already been stated in effect, the indispensable data thus desired can be obtained certainly, regularly, compactly and thoroughly only by 11 such a Special Commissioner as is contemplated in the aforementioned bill. Congress itself, two or three years hence, in order that it may act wisely and well in this matter, (for it may be safely surmised that our National Legislature will again, at the proper time, be called upon to take further proceedings in the premises,) will need and demand just such information as will be officially acquired under the provisions of this bill.

While the balance of trade against us in Central and South America should be greatly diminished, if not entirely overcome, our general business relations with those countries should be largely

increased. Almost the whole, if not quite all, of the six hundred and five millions of dollars' worth of business which they are now doing with Europe, should be done with us; and the comparatively small amount of only one hundred and sixteen millions, which we do with them, would be an ample share for Europe. Such a wholesome reversion of affairs—speaking of course from the American standpoint—brought about solely by civil and amicable proceedings, would be a valuable testimony to our sagacity, and infinitely more in accord with the general fitness of things. Let us no longer be indifferent to the several primely opulent, but thus far, in the main, rather imperfectly governed countries, at our very doors. These new, but as yet not wholly independent and self-sustaining commonwealths, are indescribably beautiful and attractive in all the inexhaustible riches of Nature. Owing to their comparative youth and inexperience, however, they are still somewhat unfixed in their bases and tendencies. Wherefore they are now earnestly seeking full protection and progress under the ægis of a physically and intellectually strong nationality; and, for purposes of foreign trade at least, they will soon find permanent moorings with us, or with one or more of the great European powers.

Not to seize and improve our present grand opportunities for foreign trade and commerce would be recreant to our duties as American citizens. Already has our lack of energy and foresight lost to us the international and interoceanic opportunity between Panama and Aspinwall; Nicaragua is not yet secured; and Tehuantepec, in its present aspect, is both problematic and repellent. Quick as we generally are in thought and action, yet in some things we are still too slow. In more than one important case, failing in the performance of certain duties that did not admit of postponement, we have irretrievably lost the advantages which would have come from judicious and prompt proceedings. 12 Of such derelictions on our part there should be no repetition. As we would have others be true to us, so should we be true to ourselves. The time has now come for us to reach out into distant lands, and to open avenues abroad for our merchants and manufacturers. The vast areas of Central and South America are the fields which we should occupy with all convenient haste and thoroughness. To these most fertile and productive fields, teeming with all the never-failing beauties and luxuries of the tropics, we are eagerly beckoned by Nature herself.

A ship canal across one of the three much mooted isthmuses of Central America should have been cut by the United States, or by citizens of the United States, at least twenty-five years ago and all the parties to the proceeding, from the least to the greatest, should have been American only—North American, Central American and South American. What we failed to do then, and are still failing to do, cannot possibly be done at too early a day in the future. Yet what we have already lost—immense as has been the loss—by not cutting the canal long ago, may, to a very great extent, be regained by speedily constructing the proposed Three Americas Railway. Let us,

therefore, like Americans worthy of both names and habitations in America, construct the projected intercontinental highway with the greatest possible prudence, energy and dispatch.

It is true, and as pleasing as true, that at home, that is to say, within the boundaries of our own republic, our national career, in the main, thus far has been a splendid success. Yet, is it not high time that we were beginning to push and expand our peaceful and profitable pursuits beyond the limits of our own country? Honor, interest, statesmanship, all answer in the affirmative. See what the diminutive, but brave and far-sighted France did at Suez? see what she is doing at Darien, at Dover and Calais, at Corinth, and at Sahara. Having in full view the wonderful engineering and commercial enterprises which, in near and remote regions, have been boldly undertaken and successfully prosecuted to completion by so small a power as modern Gaul, is it not almost enough to make Americans—Americans of the three great Americas, North, Central and South—hang their heads in shame?

Additional facts, arguments and suggestions in support of the great international and intercontinental highway here advocated, are superabundant in every direction. Railway communication between the United States and Central and South America, as a means of enabling us to secure for ourselves in perpetuity the 13 large profits of the major part of the immense and constantly increasing foreign trade and travel of those far-off countries of the tropical and transtropical South, is a matter of immediate and paramount importance to the general welfare of every nation of the New World.

The assignment of all the reasons in behalf of this incomparably meritorious enterprise, viewed in all its relations and probabilities, would be as endless a task as the assignment of all the reasons for knowledge as against ignorance, for light as against darkness, or for virtue as against vice. In a general way, every fact, argument and suggestion that was ever urged in the interest of any railroad whatever, may be legitimately urged, with at least tenfold force, in the interest of the intercontinental railway here proposed; seeing that the peoples of no less than seventeen independent nationalities (and also semi-independent Canada, perhaps soon to be wholly independent,) are to be forever and incessantly the recipients of its measureless advantages.

Was it prudent for us to open railway communication with Boston? New York? Philadelphia? Baltimore? Richmond? Wilmington? Charleston? Savannah? Mobile? New Orleans? Galveston? Nashville? Louisville? Cincinnati? Chicago? St. Louis? Denver? Omaha? Salt Lake City? and San Francisco? Undoubtedly it was wise on our part to do so, as it was also wise in us to open railway communication with all the other commercial and manufacturing and political centers with which such connections have already been formed. Equally prudent—and in some respects far more prudent—will it be for us to establish regular railway intercourse between Washington City and the

City of Mexico and the capitals of Guatemala, Honduras, Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, the Argentine Republic, Chili, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Brazil. Directly or indirectly we must become possessed of the incalculable advantages of rapid postal and personal communication with Panama, Aspinwall, Bogota, Caracas, Quito, Lima, Santiago, Cochabamba, Asuncion, Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo, and Buenos Ayres. Fortunately for all, the inestimable advantages thus sought for the United States will be reciprocal; in a thousand ways or more we ourselves will be benefited, and the people of every other American nation will be abundantly blessed.

Reasonable estimates and deductions from reliable data lead to the belief that we shall probably gain, almost at once, a new foreign commerce of the value of not less than six hundred millions 14 of dollars per annum; and this large commerce will be likely to increase, year after year, throughout all the coming ages.

While, in the matter of dollars and cents, we and all our neighboring nationalities will constantly grow richer and richer, by reason of the free and convenient intercommunication which the railway and its branches will unceasingly furnish, we ourselves shall be happily instrumental in imparting to the masses of the inhabitants of Central and South America a higher civilization than they have ever yet enjoyed; and thus, though losing nothing ourselves, like the sun, the greatest and most glorious visible mystery, which gorgeously illuminates the whole solar system without diminishing in the least his own inherent brilliancy, we shall, in due time, cheerfully bestow upon those now far from us a goodly share of the sublime and dazzling wealth of intellectual achievements.

By means of the intercontinental railway and its connections, as here proposed, we shall, far easier and better than otherwise—and perhaps only in this way—be able, at any time soon, to come to a full and practical realization of the Monroe Doctrine; thus securing, as against European and monarchical machinations, an invincible unity of American interests, and thereby giving more force and prominence than ever before to the excellence of democratic and republican institutions.

Europe, with her large, long-established and liberally-subsidized lines of ocean steamers, is now, as has already been stated, far ahead of us on the high seas, and may continue so for generations to come; but the land itself, the very basis of all solid things in this world, is open to us, as it is not and never can be to Europe; and herein and hereon, if we will but avail of the vast vantage-ground which Nature herself has so kindly given us, we shall indubitably achieve the grand success at which we aim.

Our own shipping interests, our waterway possibilities, no less than our railway extensions, will be greatly stimulated and advanced by carrying out the intercontinental enterprise thus advocated.

Orders for our manufactures and other commodities will, in most cases, be given in person or by letter speedily brought by railway; but much of the heavier kinds of merchandise so ordered will doubtless be freighted to its final destination, or taken far on its way thitherward, by steamers, or by ships under sail. This increased and ever-increasing business between American merchants and between Americans in general—between Americans of the far South, Americans of the far North, and Americans of intermediate 15 latitudes—will, in the very nature of things, create such a demand for American bottoms as never existed before, and which will doubtless soon afterward be supplied from our own ship-yards.

Travel and the profits arising therefrom, pleasure-excursions and sight-seeing, health-seeking and recreation, are also important considerations which should concern us in our deliberations upon this subject. The account under this heading, properly kept, will show losses on the one side and gains on the other, but for us in the United States the aggregate of gains will far exceed the aggregate of losses. Under the winsome and invigorating facilities of railway communication, not only the money-bringing current of trade, but also the jewel-fringed current of travel, can be easily turned from the commercial and other capitals of Europe into the magnificent cities and parks and groves and watering-places of our own country.

Education and skilled labor, in the persons of thousands and tens of thousands of the youth, of both sexes, of Spanish-America will continuously seek and find development in our institutions of learning, in our associations of science and art and literature, and in our numerous workshops, in some of which, day and night, the manly music of machinery and the heroic harmony of hammers, intermingled with other exhilarating and delightful salutations of industry, may be heard resounding almost incessantly.

Just in the proportion that we extend the area of civilization, so will we multiply the possibilities and the prospects for invaluable new inventions and discoveries. But for the immigration of the white races into North America, and their permanent residence and unrestrained increase upon this continent, the world might never have had a cotton-gin, a planning-mill, a sewing machine, a telegraph, a telephone, or any one of the scores of other pre-eminently useful and matchless improvements which have here been conceived and perfected in the interest of all mankind.

The nine republics of South America, and the five republics of Central America, as also the republic of Mexico—a total of fifteen contiguous Spanish-American republics—have all fashioned their forms of government, and, for the most part, framed their fed laws, upon bases quite similar to our own; all of them, in comparison with us, being of subsequent national origin, and having confidently looked to us as their noblest model and exemplar. Let us prove ourselves worthy of the high compliment which all these young nations have so frankly and so sincerely paid us. The 16

peoples of South and Central America desire to come among us temporarily and learn our ways of life, which, in some respects, but not in all, are better than their own; and they are able and willing to pay us liberally for tuition in every knowledge-imparting lesson. Their coming among us and our going among them will be the coming and the going of mutual and great gainers. Their countries are superabundantly rich in agricultural resources, in mineral wealth, in raw materials and natural facilities for manufacturing, in unparalleled opportunities for commerce, and in remunerative demands for the ingenuity and skill of our best artisans, engineers, farmers, miners, merchants, capitalists, contractors, and men of versatile business capacities.

Finally, not only is it our privilege, but it is manifestly our duty, always to do the right thing at the right time. This is certainly, as it seems to me, the right time to make an earnest, determined and successful effort to establish railway communication with Central and South America; and hence, in my opinion, this is precisely the right time for the Congress of the United States to pass the bill now under consideration. I respectfully ask that it be passed accordingly. The passage by Congress of the bill here advocated, though it will entail only an insignificant expense in comparison with what it may be fairly expected to yield in return, will, I believe, be followed by results which will lead to a most beneficial diffusion of our civilization and influence throughout many foreign lands; all American lands, however, and capable of such unification in general sentiment, purpose and action, as, in connection with the United States, to form the grandest and most prosperous and progressive sisterhood of nations that ever existed upon the earth.

Respectfully submitted, Hinton Rowan Helper.

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